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TEXT OF TELEGRAM 87KABUL 000504

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE  
SECSTATE WASHOC IMMEDIATE 6226  
INFO AFGHAN WAR COLLECTIVE  
USIA WASHOC 1620  
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANOU  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
FT BRAGG NC AFVS//POE//SB  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE  
HQ USAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE  
HQ USAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE//INC?  
USNMR SHAPE BE//INTAFF//  
USCENTCOM MACOILL AFB FL//CCJ2-IOM//  
DEFENSE COMMUNICATION SUPPORT GROUP  
RUCLFNA/347 TFW MOODY AFB GA//IN//  
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT  
FSTC INTEL OPS CHARLOTTESVILLE VA//AIAST-IO-CMI//  
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MILITARY ADDRESSEES ALSO FOR POLADS; PARIS ALSO FOR USOD;  
DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR NEA/PAB, MS. MILLIKAN; THE HAGUE FOR  
A-DAM AND R-DAM  
E.O. 12356: OECL 3/23/93  
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TAGS: ASEC, MOPS, MCAP, PHUM, PINR, PINS, PROP, SREF, UR, AF  
SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT: MARCH 16 - MARCH 22, 1987

REF: KABUL 0464 ✓

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION MAY BE BRIEFED TO JOURNALISTS  
EXCEPT WHERE OTHERWISE NOTED. (NOTE TO BRIEFERS IN ISLAMABAD.)

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PESHAWAR AND NEW DELHI: YOU MAY WISH TO CONSIDER CONCENTRATING ON SUMMARIES AND SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM PARAS 4 AND 5.)

3. SUMMARY: WHILE KABUL WAS RELATIVELY QUIET FIGHTING RAGED ELSEWHERE, NOTABLY IN NANGARHAR WHERE MUJAHIDIN DOWNED THREE DRA AIRCRAFT IN A SINGLE DAY. FIGHTING WAS ALSO REPORTED HEAVY IN KANDAHAR AND HERAT. ACCORDING TO A WELL-SOURCED REPORT FORCES UNDER COMMANDER MASOOD RECENTLY ROCKETED SOVIET TERRITORY FROM AFGHANISTAN. CLOSER TO KABUL, HELICOPTERS CONDUCTED A REPRISAL RAID WEST OF THE CITY AFTER MUJAHIDIN OVERRAN A SOVIET BASE. THE ATTACKING HELICOPTERS DESTROYED HOMES AND MOSQUES. IN THE PACHMAN AREA MUJAHIDIN ACTIVITIES REPORTEDLY HAVE BEEN HAMPERED BY UNUSUALLY LATE AND HEAVY SNOWS. A MASSIVE SOVIET COLUMN WAS OBSERVED LIMPING INTO THE KABUL AREA FROM THE JALALABAD ROAD SUGGESTING HEAVY FIGHTING RECENTLY TO THE EAST. ACCORDING TO NUMEROUS AFGHAN REPORTS KABUL AUTHORITIES ARE RESUMING THE FORCED INDOCTION OF YOUNG MALES INTO THE ARMY INCLUDING RECENTLY RETURNED REFUGEES. DRA PROPAGANDA APPEARS TO BE STEPPING UP ITS ANTI-U.S. ATTACKS. THERE ARE GROWING INDICATIONS OF FLAGGING MORALE AMONG REGIME AND PARTY CADRE. SEVERAL REPORTS CONTEND THAT SENIOR REGIME AND PARTY CADRE HAVE BEGUN EXCHANGING LARGE SUMS OF AFGHANIS FOR HARD CURRENCY. LOW-RANKING CADRE REPORTEDLY ARE ANGRY ABOUT A NEW REGIME

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POLICY THAT TRANSFERS CLERICAL PERSONNEL, INCLUDING PARTY CADRE, TO AREAS OUTSIDE OF KABUL WHERE THEY ASSUME CLERICAL RESPONSIBILITIES PREVIOUSLY CARRIED OUT BY MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO ARE BEING FREED FOR COMBAT DUTY. THE KABUL-BASED CIVILIAN CADRE MUST SERVE IN THESE MORE DANGEROUS RURAL AREAS WITHOUT THEIR FAMILIES WHO REMAIN IN KABUL. END SUMMARY.

#### KABUL PYROTECHNICS:

WHILE KABUL REMAINED RELATIVELY QUIET, ALMOST NIGHTLY OUTGOING ARTILLERY FIRE AND CONVOY MOVEMENTS INDICATED MODERATE TO HIGH LEVELS OF COMBAT ACTIVITY IN THE KABUL AREA. VEHICLE CHECKS AND DEPLOYMENT OF SOVIET ARMORED VEHICLES AT NIGHT AT KEY INTERSECTIONS REFLECTED CONTINUED HIGH SECURITY CONCERNS IN THE CITY.

-- MARCH 17: AT 1530, DIPLOMATS NOTED TWO EXPLOSIONS IN THE DIRECTION OF THE AIRPORT.

-- MARCH 18: DIPLOMATS REPORT OUTGOING ARTILLERY FIRE FROM THE KHAIR KHANA AREA BETWEEN 0005 AND 0010 FOLLOWED AT 0020 BY SMALL ARMS AND HEAVY MACHINE GUN FIRE EXCHANGE NORTH OF KHAIR KHANA. AT 0515 AN EXPLOSION WAS HEARD ON THE EAST SIDE OF KABUL. AT 1820 DIPLOMATS REPORT A SINGLE EXPLOSION IN SOUTH KABUL. AT 2145, SMALL ARMS FIRE WAS HEARD IN SHARE NAU FOLLOWED BY AN EXPLOSION IN SOUTHERN



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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

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INFO AFGHAN WAR COLLECTIVE

USIA WASHOC 1621

AMEMBASSY COLOMB

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE

FT BRAGG NC AFVS//PDE//SB

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CINCSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE

HQ USAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE

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MARCH 19: A DIPLOMAT NOTED THE SOUND OF DISTANT INCOMING

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OPONANCE AT 0100. AT 2115 SMALL ARMS FIRE WAS HEARD IN WAZIR AKBAR KHAN FOLLOWED BY EXTENSIVE USE OF ILLUMINATION FLARES IN THE KHAIR KHANA-PERIMETER ROAD AREA BETWEEN 2215 AND 2300. AT APPROXIMATELY THE SAME TIME DIPLOMATS HEARD OUTGOING ARTILLERY FIRE FROM NORTHEAST KABUL.

-- MARCH 20: A SINGLE LOUD EXPLOSION, POSSIBLY A BOMB, ECHOED THROUGH KABUL AT 1208. SHORTLY AFTER, AT 1235, OUTGOING ARTILLERY WAS NOTED. BETWEEN

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1630 AND 1700 DIPLOMATS REPORT OUTGOING ARTILLERY TO THE SOUTH. FROM 2200 UNTIL 2400 DIPLOMATS NOTED THAT THE HIGH POWER SEARCH BEAM LOCATED ON BIBI MARU HILL SWEEPED THE RIDGES AND HILLSIDES IN AND NEAR THE CITY.

-- MARCH 21: BETWEEN 0030 AND 0045 DIPLOMATS REPORT AUTOMATIC SMALL ARMS FIRE IN NORTHERN KABUL. AT 2220 AN EXPLOSION WAS HEARD IN NORTHERN KABUL FOLLOWED BY HEAVY CALIBER WEAPONS FIRE. BETWEEN 2230 AND 2330, THE SEARCH BEAM ON BIBI MARU HILL PLAYED ACROSS THE CITY. DIPLOMATS NOTED SMALL ARTILLERY AND HEAVY MACHINE GUN FIRE IN NORTHERN KABUL AT 2315.

-- MARCH 22: DIPLOMATS REPORT HEARING INTERMITTENT HEAVY CALIBER WEAPONS FIRE AFTER MIDNIGHT. IT BECAME MORE CONCENTRATED BETWEEN 0430 AND 0445. BETWEEN 0200 AND 0210 THERE WAS OUTGOING ARTILLERY FIRE TO THE SOUTH. INTERMITTENT OUTGOING ARTILLERY FIRE WAS HEARD THROUGH MUCH OF THE EVENING.

5. MILITARY MOVEMENT IN THE KABUL AREA:

THE PATTERN OF NIGHTTIME FIXED-WING AIR ARRIVALS CONTINUED FROM THE PREVIOUS WEEK. UNUSUAL OUTBOUND HELICOPTER MOVEMENT AFTER SUNSET ALSO WAS NOTED. DIPLOMATS REPORT THE RETURN OF A

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LARGE SOVIET CONVOY FROM JALALABAD DURING THE WEEK.  
HELICOPTER SURVEILLANCE WAS ACTIVE MOST NIGHTS.

(A) (AIR):

2. MARCH 17: SHORTLY AFTER 1200 DIPLOMATS OBSERVED FOUR SPORT-TYPE PARACHUTE JUMPS FROM AN MI-8 WHICH HOVERED AT APPROXIMATELY 3000 FEET OVER THE JESHYN GROUNDS IN THE CITY. BEGINNING AT 1930 EIGHT AN-12'S OR AN-26'S ARRIVED IN KABUL. AT 2120 AND 2215 DIPLOMATS HEARD SEVERAL HELICOPTERS DEPARTING KABUL AIRPORT.

3. MARCH 19: AT 1640, EIGHT SU-25'S OVERFLEW KABUL AT APPROXIMATELY 10,000 FEET HEAD SHOUTH. BETWEEN 2100 AND 2200 SEVEN AN-12'S ARRIVED. FOLLOWING THEIR ARRIVAL SEVERAL HELICOPTERS DEPARTED.

(B) (VEHICULAR):

-- MARCH 17: AT 0645 A DIPLOMAT OBSERVED AN AFGHAN CONVOY DEPARTING KABUL ON THE JALALABAD ROAD. IT INCLUDED TWO T-54'S, ONE T-55, FOUR TOWED 122 MM GUNS, ONE BTR-152, 11 TROOP TRANSPORT TRUCKS AND ONE TRUCK MOUNTED ZU-23 GUN. BETWEEN 1845 AND 1900, DIPLOMATS SAW TWO LARGE SOVIET MILITARY AMBULANCES SPEED TOWARD THE SOVIET MILITARY HOSPITAL FROM THE AIRPORT WHILE THREE OTHERS RACED TOWARD

THE AIRPORT. MORE AMBULANCES SPED TO THE AIRPORT AT 2340.

-- MARCH 18: BETWEEN 0620 AND 0630 TWO LARGE SOVIET SUPPLY CONVOYS (UNIT NUMBERS 1111 AND 0011) MOVED OFF PERIMETER ROAD NORTH ON TO THE SALANG HIGHWAY. TWO OTHER SOVIET CONVOYS, UNIT NUMBERS 1311 AND 1043 (THE LATTER COMPRISING 46 FUEL TANKERS ESCORTED BY ZU-23'S) MOVED WEST ON PERIMETER ROAD AT 0640.

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
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USCINCPAC/AMEMBASSY COLOMBO 1734  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
FT BRAGG NC AFVS//POE//SB  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
CINCSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE  
HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE  
HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE//INCD  
USNMR SHAPE BE//INTAFF//  
USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2-IDM//  
DEFENSE COMMUNICATION SUPPORT GROUP  
HCLFNA/347 TFW MOODY AFB GA//IN//  
USOCCSOUTH NAPLES IT  
FSTC INTEL OPS CHARLOTTEVILLE VA//AIAS-IO-CMI//  
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MARCH 20: AT 0700, DIPLOMATS OBSERVED A SOVIET ARMORED  
COLUMN CONSISTING OF 16 BTR'S (MOSTLY BTR-80'S), TWO TANK  
RECOVERY VEHICLES (TOWING Q-30 GUNS) AND FOUR TRUCKS (TWO  
OF WHICH TOWED Q-30 GUNS) HEADING EAST ONTO JALALABAD ROAD FROM  
PERIMETER ROAD. DURING THE LATE MORNING DIPLOMATS REPORT  
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SEEING FIVE PAIRS OF TRUCK MOUNTED SA-3 MISSILES. THE DRA-  
CREWED VEHICLES WERE PARKED HEADED WEST ON KARGHA ROAD.

-- MARCH 21: DIPLOMATS REPORT SEEING A MASSIVE SOVIET  
CONVOY MOVING WEST OFF JALALABAD ROAD ONTO PERIMETER ROAD  
AND HEADING NORTH. THE HELMETED, CAMOUFLAGED CREWS WEARING  
FLACK JACKETS APPEARED DUSTY AND FATIGUED, SUGGESTING THEY  
WERE RETURNING FROM EXTENSIVE TIME IN THE FIELD. EQUIPMENT,  
MUCH OF WHICH WAS TOWED, AND SOME OF WHICH APPARENTLY HAD

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BROKEN DOWN BORE COMBAT DAMAGE. THERE WERE LONG GAPS BETWEEN ELEMENTS IN THE CONVOY WHICH STRAGGLED INTO KABUL BETWEEN 1000 AND 1500. THE CONVOY INCLUDED MUCH ARMOR: T-62'S, T-54'S, T-55'S, TANKS, VARIOUS SELF-PROPELLED GUNS AND VARIOUS ARMORED PERSONNEL CARRIERS. THERE WAS ALSO OLDER MODEL, INFREQUENTLY SEEN SOVIET EQUIPMENT SUCH AS T-34 TANKS. ONE T-62 APPEARED TO BE EQUIPPED WITH THE FRAME OF A MINE CLEARING DEVICE. A ZIL-131 WAS FITTED WITH WHAT LOOKED LIKE A BRDM TURRET IN ITS BED. T-62'S WERE MODIFIED WITH EXTRA ARMOR ON THEIR TURRETS. ALSO DURING THE DAY, A SOVIET CONVOY OF APPROXIMATELY 20 BMP'S AND 40 TRUCKS MOVED FROM KHAIR KHANA TOWARD THE GHAZNI ROAD.

-- COMBAT IN THE PROVINCES --

#### 6. KABUL (PROVINCE):

\*(A) SHOMALI: A RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC SOURCE REPORTS THAT MUJAHIDIN ATTACKED A DRA CONVOY NEAR MIR BACHCHEH KUT (34°45'N 69°08'E) ON MARCH 14 DESTROYING ONE ARMORED VEHICLE AND THREE FUEL TANKERS. SEPARATE AFGHAN SOURCES CONFIRM THE REPORT OF MUJAHIDIN DOWNING OF ONE JET AND TWO HELICOPTERS (ALL DRA) NEAR BAGRAM MARCH 3 (PARA 6 REFTEL).

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(B) PAGHMAN: MUJAHIDIN IN THE PAGHMAN AREA HAVE TOLD A RELIABLE AFGHAN SOURCE THAT LATE SNOWS HAVE HAMPERED MUJAHIDIN OPERATIONS IN THE PAGHMAN AREA, SLOWING MOVEMENT AND IMPEDING ACCESS TO CACHES. MOST MUJAHIDIN IN THE PAGHMAN AREA HAVE REACHED INFORMAL LOCAL CEASE-FIRE AGREEMENTS WITH DRA UNITS FOR THE TIME BEING. HOWEVER IN AREAS SOUTHWEST OF PAGHMAN, NOTABLY ARGANDEH KHOLDART AND PASHAI VILLAGES HELICOPTER ATTACKED MUJAHIDIN ON MARCH 17. LOCAL SOURCES ALSO CLAIM PROTRACTED SMALL-SCALE CLASHES BETWEEN DRA AND MUJAHIDIN NEAR KARGHA LAKE, MARCH 17-19. DIPLOMATS AT KARGHA ON MARCH 20 NOTED INTERMITTENT ARTILLERY FIRE TO THE SOUTH AND SOUTHWEST OF KARGHA THROUGH THE MORNING AND INTO THE MID-AFTERNOON.

(C) KABUL-WEST: AT SANGLAKH (34°32'N 68°40'E) MUJAHIDIN ON MARCH 17 OVERRAN A SOVIET POST. WITHIN HOURS HELICOPTERS FROM KABUL ATTACKED A NEARBY VILLAGE DESTROYING FOUR HOUSES AND TWO SMALL MOSQUES IN WHAT AN AFGHAN SOURCE DESCRIBED AS A REPRISAL RAID. AT QALA QAOZI (SIX KMS WEST OF DARULAMAN) ON MARCH 15, AN AFGHAN SOURCE REPORTS, MUJAHIDIN ROCKETED A SOVIET TRACKED VEHICLE.

#### 7. HELMAND:

A DIPLOMATIC SOURCE OF UNTESTED RELIABILITY REPORTS THAT SOVIET FORCES ARE CONSTRUCTING A BASE, A SIGNIFICANT PORTION



OF WHICH IS UNDERGROUND, IN THE DASHTI MARGD (DESERT AREA  
WEST OF LASHKAGAR).

8. NIMRUZ:

THE SAME SOURCE FOR THE ABOVE REPORTS THAT ON MARCH 10  
MUJAHIDIN DESTROYED A TRACKED VEHICLE ON THE ROAD BETWEEN  
NIMRUZ AND KANDAHAR KILLING OR WOUNDING TEN DRA TROOPS.

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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL

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SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6229

INFO AFGHAN WAR COLLECTIVE

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AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

USCINCEUR VAHINGEN GE

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USCINCSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE

USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE

USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE//INCO

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NANGARHAR:

DIPLomat WITH AN UNPROVEN REPORTING RECORD STATES THAT DURING  
THE SECOND WEEK OF MARCH MUJAHIDIN DOWNED ONE PLANE NEAR JALALABAD.  
ALL ABOARD WERE KILLED. A VERY RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC SOURCE  
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REPORTS THAT AT KHOGAI (34°13'N 70°16'E) MUJAHIDIN ATTACKED

A DRA CONVOY ON MARCH 12. ON MARCH 15, THE THIRD DAY OF

FIGHTING IN THE AREA AFTER THE INITIAL ATTACK, MUJAHIDIN DOWNED

THREE DRA HELICOPTERS. AN UNCONFIRMED DIPLOMATIC REPORT

CLAIMS THAT MUJAHIDIN RECENTLY ATTACKED JALALABAD AIRPORT.

A DIPLOMAT WITH AN EXCELLENT REPORTING RECORD STATES THAT ON

MARCH 14 A SERIOUS CLASH OCCURRED BETWEEN MUJAHIDIN AND SOVIET-

DRA TROOPS AT BALA BAGH (34°24'N 70°14'E). SOVIET-DRA CASUALTIES

REPORTEDLY WERE VERY HIGH WHILE MUJAHIDIN LOSSES WERE FOUR

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KILLED AND DNE WOUNDED.

10. KANDAHAR:

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AFGHAN SOURCES REPORT CONTINUED HEAVY FIGHTING IN THE KANDAHAR AREA. A VERY RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC SOURCE CONFIRMS THE PREVIOUSLY ALLEGED MUJAHIDIN MARCH 12 MASSIVE ROCKET ATTACK (REFTEL PARA 7), ON KANDAHAR AIRPORT. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, MUJAHIDIN ASSUMED POSITIONS JUST OUTSIDE THE MINED PERIMETER AND FIRED OVER 100 ROCKETS AT VIRTUALLY POINT-BLANK RANGE.

11. HERAT:

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AFGHAN AND DIPLOMATIC SOURCES CLAIM HEAVY FIGHTING IN THE AREA OF HERAT, PARTICULARLY DURING FEBRUARY 16 TO 23. ON MARCH 16, ACCORDING TO A RELIABLE DIPLOMAT MUJAHIDIN DOWNED A DRA HELICOPTER NEAR SHINDANO BASE KILLING ONE DRA OFFICER AND THREE ENLISTED PERSONNEL.

12. PAKTIA:

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A RESIDENT OF THE GARDEZ AREA NOTES THAT WHILE THERE IS NO SYMPATHY FOR THE REGIME IN THE AREA, THE DRA, FOR THE FIRST TIME, IS CONFIDENTIAL.

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THE IN YEARS, HAS BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH PERMANENT POSTS IN THE RURAL AREAS. WITHIN FOUR KMS OF GARDEZ CITY, SUSPECTED PARTY PERSONNEL RISK BEING KILLED ON SIGHT. FARMERS IN THE AREA LIMIT THEMSELVES TO SUBSISTENCE AGRICULTURE RATHER THAN FOR MAXIMUM PRODUCTION. THE DIFFICULTIES AND DANGERS OF CULTIVATING LARGE TRACTS OF LAND IN AN AREA OF EXTENSIVE MILITARY ACTIVITY AND FREQUENT COMBAT HAVE FORCED FARMERS TO RESTRICT THEIR FARMING TO THE SMALLEST AMOUNT NEEDED TO SURVIVE.

13. GHAZNI:

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ACCORDING TO A USUALLY RELIABLE AFGHAN SOURCE, MUJAHIDIN DOWNED A JET FIGHTER NEAR GHAZNI CITY EARLY IN THE REPORTING PERIOD.

14. WARDAK:

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A VERY RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC SOURCE REPORTS THAT ON MARCH 14 MUJAHIDIN ATTACKED A DRA POST AT CHINA PAULA (UNLOCATED). FIVE OR SIX DRA TROOPS AT THE POST SURRENDERED TO THE MUJAHIDIN.

15. MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS:

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(A) A RELIABLE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION SOURCE CLAIMS THAT RECENTLY TROOPS LOYAL TO COMMANDER MASDOO FIRED ROCKETS



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• (S) A CONSISTENTLY RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC SOURCE REPORTS THAT

AFGHAN CONTACTS CLAIM FULLY-EQUIPPED SOVIET FORCES CURRENTLY

ARE CROSSING INTO AFGHANISTAN AT HAIRATAN. (COMMENT: WHILE

WE CONSIDER THE DIPLOMATIC SOURCE FOR THIS REPORT RELIABLE,

WE HAVE NO INFORMATION TO CORROBORATE THIS REPORT. END COMMENT.)

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# 16. POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS:

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### (A) THE KING:

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ACCORDING TO SEVERAL UNCONFIRMED REPORTS FORMER KING ZAHIR IS  
IN, OR RECENTLY TRAVELLED TO SAUDI ARABIA WHILE OTHERS  
SUGGEST TRAVEL TO PAKISTAN. ON MARCH 14, DRA TELEVISION  
PRESENTED DOCUMENTARY WHICH PORTRAYED THE ROYAL FAMILY

INCLUDING THE FORMER KING IN A NON-CRITICAL LIGHT. THE 45 MINUTE PROGRAM WAS REGARDED AS HIGHLY UNUSUAL.

(B) THE NEW PUBLIC HEALTH MINISTER:

A SOURCE WHO RECENTLY CALLED ON THE NEW MINISTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH, SHER BAHADUR, CONCLUDED THAT THE NEW HEALTH CHIEF, UNLIKE HIS TECHOCRAT PREDECESSOR, IS A PRO-NAJIB, PARTY MAN. THE CALLER REMARKED ON THE TWO PHOTOGRAPHS OF NAJIB IN THE OFFICE (ONE A LARGE MURAL OF NAJIB IN MOSCOW) AND A BUST OF LENIN ON THE MINISTER'S DESK. THE SAME SOURCE REPORTS THAT CONTACTS IN THE MINISTRY EXPECT THAT ANOTHER SENIOR HEALTH MINISTRY OFFICIAL SOON WILL BE REPLACED.

(C) POSSIBLE PLENUM:

RUMORS CIRCULATED DURING THE WEEK ABOUT A PARTY PLENUM THAT SOON WOULD CONVEENE (THE THIRD IN APPROXIMATELY FOUR MONTHS). THE SOURCE FOR THIS REPORT SAID THE PRINCIPAL BUSINESS OF THE EXPECTED PLENUM WOULD BE FURTHER MOVES AGAINST KARMAL SUPPORTERS. RECENT KHALQI DEMANDS FOR GREATER POWER (REFTEL) MIGHT ALSO BE A FOCUS OF A PLENUM IF CALLED IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

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(D) MINISTRY OF COMMERCE REORGANIZATION:

WHILE MANY RUMORS OF NEW MINISTERIAL CHANGES ARE CIRCULATING, ONE THAT HAS BEEN PARTICULARLY PERSISTENT (SOURCED TO EAST EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS) IS THAT THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE WILL BE DIVIDED INTO TWO SEPARATE MINISTRIES: ONE FOR FOREIGN TRADE AND ONE FOR DOMESTIC COMMERCE. REPORTS SUGGEST THAT CURRENT COMMERCE MINISTER JALALAR WOULD BECOME MINISTER OF FOREIGN TRADE.

(E) PARTY/REGIME MORALE:

ACCORDING TO SEVERAL WELL-SOURCED ACCOUNTS, SENIOR PARTY AND REGIME PERSONNEL RECENTLY HAVE EXCHANGED LARGE AMOUNTS OF AFGHANIS FOR HARD CURRENCY. A SEPARATE REPORT CLAIMS THAT SOME REGIME PERSONNEL ARE DELIBERATELY SABOTAGING REGIME OPERATIONS. RECENTLY, AIRLINE PERSONNEL PERMITTED A BAKHTAR AIRLINES TO RETURN FROM A SCHEDULED FLIGHT FROM EUROPE TO KABUL EMPTY, INCURRING A CONSIDERABLE LOSS TO THE AIRLINES.

(F) THE DRA AT GENEVA:

RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC SOURCES CLAIM THAT THE DRA DELEGATION DEPARTED GENEVA A DAY EARLY, IN EFFECT BOYCOTTING THE FINAL SESSION. THE DRA ACCORDING TO THIS ACCOUNT, DID NOT CONCUR IN THE CONCLUDING STATEMENT BY CORDOVEZ.

(G) INTENSIFYING DRAFT CAMPAIGN:

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RELIABLE AFGHAN SOURCES CLAIM THAT MILITARY-AGE MALES  
RETURNING FROM PAKISTAN REFUGEE CAMPS TO THE KABUL AREA ARE  
BEING DRAFTED UPON THEIR RETURN. SEPARATELY, AFGHAN PARENTS  
CLAIM THEY ARE KEEPING DRAFT-AGE SONS INDOORS AT PRESENT, FOR  
FEAR OF RESUMED PRESS GANG OPERATIONS IN THE CITY.

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|      | NSAE-00 | SSO-00  | HA-09   | L-03    | PM-10  | EAP-00 | PA-01   |
|      | OMB-01  | INRE-00 | RP-10   | ACDA-12 | SP-02  | SR-06  | SNP-01  |
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FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE  
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6231  
INFO AFGHAN WAR COLLECTIVE  
USIA WASHDC 1625  
AMEMBASSY COLDMBD  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
FT BRAGG NC AFVS//PDE//SB  
CENCPAC HONOLULU HI  
CINCSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE  
HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE  
HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE//INCO  
USNMR SHAPE BE//INTAFF//  
USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2-IOM//  
DEFENSE COMMUNICATION SUPPORT GROUP  
J4CLFNA/347 TFW MOODY AFB GA//IN//  
F50DCDSOUTH NAPLES IT  
F5TC INTEL OPS CHARLOTTESVILLE VA//AIAST-IO-CMI//  
D N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 06 OF 08 KABUL 0504  
(R) DEARTH OF PARTY CADRE IN RURAL AREAS:  
IN A MARCH 13 SPEECH TO THE SECRETARIES OF VILLAGE PARTY  
ORGANIZATIONS NAJIB ANNOUNCED PARTY INTENTIONS TO SEND PARTY  
CADRE BACK TO VILLAGES THEY HAD "ABANDONED" IN FAVOR OF THE  
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SECURITY OF KABUL AND OTHER TOWNS HELD BY THE DRA.

(E) LOW RANKING CADRE TO BE SENT OUT OF KABUL:

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A RELIABLE AFGHAN SOURCE REPORTS THAT THE REGIME HAS BEGUN  
SENDING LOW- RANKING CADRE FROM KABUL MINISTRIES AND OFFICES  
TO AREAS UNDER REGIME CONTRDL OUTSIDE OF KABUL. THERE THESE  
CADRE ARE TO REPLACE MILITARY PERSONNEL WHO UP TO NOW HAVE  
BEEN ASSIGNED TO CLERICAL DUTIES, THEREBY FREEING THEM FOR



COMBAT OUTY. THE KABUL CAORE, MOSTLY LOW RANKING PARTY CAORE FROM BOTH PARCHAM AND KHALQ FACTIONS, ARE ASSIGNED FOR SIX MONTHS AND ARE NOT PERMITTED TO BRING THEIR FAMILIES WHO WILL REMAIN IN KABUL. ACCORDING TO THE SOURCE, THE REGIME EXPECTS TO REDUCE THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE LOW RANKING CAORE WILL FLEE TO PAKISTAN BY KEEPING THEIR FAMILIES IN KABUL. THE POLICY IS EXTREMELY UNPOPULAR WITH THE CAORE ASSIGNED BECAUSE OF THE DANGERS AND HARSHIPS OF WORKING IN THE LESS SECURE AREAS.

#### 17. SOVIETIZATION:

KABUL MEDIA REPORTS ON THE MARCH 12 POLITBURO SESSION NOTE THAT IT HAD "CONFIRMED A PROPOSAL FOR SENDING 1500 CHILDREN ... FOR A SHORT TERM REST AND RECREATION IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS OF THE SOVIET UNION."

#### 18. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS:

##### (A) INDIAN AIRLINES USE OF KANDAHAR:

WELL-INFORMED SOURCE REPORTS THAT INDIAN AIRLINES IS AGAIN USING KANDAHAR AIRPORT AS AN ALTERNATE IN EMERGENCIES FOR ITS NEW DELHI-KABUL FLIGHT.

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##### (B) BACKGROUND TO DUBAI-KABUL AIR LINK:

THE RECENTLY ANNOUNCED BAKHTAR AIRLINES PLAN TO INAGURATE FLIGHTS BETWEEN KABUL AND DUBAI IS IN FACT A RENEWAL OF A ROUTE FLOWN PREVIOUSLY. IN THE PAST PASSENGERS ON THE ROUTE WERE FEW AND CARGO PRIMARILY WAS IN-BOUND TO KABUL WITH LITTLE BEING SHIPPED TO DUBAI. MUCH OF THE INCOMING CARGO WAS TRANSHIPPE IN DUBAI FROM THE FAR EAST FOR FLIGHT INTO KABUL. AEROFLOT, WHICH FLIES INTO NEARBY SHARJAH, IS EXPECTED TO PROVIDE STRONG COMPETITION TO THE BAKHTAR ROUTING AND PRECLUDES THE POSSIBILITY OF IT BEING PROFITABLE.

##### (C) FUEL SHORTAGES:

BUSINESS SOURCES REPORT NEW SHORTAGES OF DIESEL FUEL WITH LITTLE OR NO AVAILABILITY THROUGH THE REGIME. DIESEL IS AVAILABLE ON THE BLACK MARKET AT 3,000 AFGHANIS PER 55 GALLON DRUM.

##### (D) SOVIETS SHIP IN NEW CURRENCY:

AN AFGHAN SOURCE REPORTS THAT THE SOVIETS CURRENTLY ARE BRINGING IN LARGE QUANTITIES OF NEWLY PRINTED CURRENCY. THE EXCHANGE RATE FOR THE AFGHANI IS HOVERING AT 160 TO THE DOLLAR.



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 AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE  
 SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6232  
 INFO AFGHAN WAR COLLECTIVE  
 USIA WASHDC 1626  
 AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
 AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
 USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
 FT BRAGG NC AFVS//POE//SB  
 CINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
 CINCSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE  
 HQ AAAA/HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE  
 HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE//INCO  
 USNMR SHAPE BE//INTAFF//  
 USCENCOMACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2-IGM//  
 DEFENSE COMMUNICATION SUPPORT GROUP  
 RUCLFNA/347 TFW MOODY AFB GA//IN//  
 USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT  
 PSTC INTEL OPS CHARLOTTESVILLE VA//AIAS-IG-CMI//  
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(S) NEW SOVIET-DRA AGREEMENTS:  
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DRA MEDIA REPORT THAT THE SOVIET UNION AND DRA ON MARCH 18  
 SIGNED A 21 MILLION RUBLE CONTRACT FOR CONSTRUCTION AND  
 EQUIPPING OF THE YATEEM-TAO NATURAL GAS FIELD. CONSTRUCTION  
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AND EQUIPPING OF THE FIELD IS SUPPOSED TO BEGIN IN JUNE AND BE  
 COMPLETED IN 14 MONTHS. THE SOVIETS WILL PROVIDE 15 MILLION  
 RUBLES WITH THE REST COMING FROM THE DRA STATE BUDGET.

19. ROAD SECURITY:

(A) KABUL TO GARDEZ:

THE ROAD FROM KABUL TO GARDEZ IS PASSABLE BUT REQUIRES TWICE

AS LONG AS BEFORE TO TRAVERSE ACCORDING TO A GAROEZ RESIDENT.

(B) THE SALANG:

A RECENT TRAVELLER NOTED THAT TRAVEL BETWEEN PULI KHUMRI AND KABUL REQUIRES 13 HOURS BY PRIVATE CAR. THE ROAD IS IN POOR CONDITION WITH MANY LARGE POTHLES LIMITING SPEED TO A MAXIMUM OF 30 KMS PER HOUR. ON THE JOURNEY THE TRAVELLER ENCOUNTERED THREE TO FOUR MUJAHIDIN AND THE SAME NUMBER OF ORA CHECKPOINTS. ORA CHECKPOINTS WERE ALL RELATIVELY CLOSE TO KABUL. FROM THE SALANG TUNNEL NORTH TO THE SOVIET BORDER, A SEPARATE TRAVELLER CLAIMS THAT ALONG MUCH OF THE ROADSIDE ARE WRECKED AND BURNED-OUT HULKS OF MILITARY VEHICLES.

(C) JALALABAD ROAD:

HEAVY RAIN AND SNOWFALL HAVE CREATED FLOODING PROBLEMS ALONG THE JALALABAD ROAD. TRAVELLERS HAVE NOTED THAT MANY SMALL BRIDGES ARE OUT REQUIRING TRAVELLERS TO FORD THE UNUSUALLY HIGH STREAMS. TRAVEL BETWEEN KABUL AND JALALABAD, WHICH HAD REQUIRED APPROXIMATELY SEVEN HOURS, NOW REQUIRES EIGHT TO TEN HOURS.

20. WEATHER/CROP CONCERNS:

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KABUL MEDIA REPORT HEAVY RAINS HAVE RAISED RIVERS IN SEVERAL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY AND MAY CAUSE FLOODING OF THE KABUL, KOKCHA, NAGHLU (NANGARHAR) KUNDUZ, MORGHAB AND HELMAND RIVERS. JUST BEFORE THE RECENT HEAVY RAINS IN THE KABUL AREA (MARCH 20-22) KABUL MEDIA CLAIMED THERE WERE 170 CMS OF SNOW I NEAR THE SALANG PASS. DESPITE RECENT HEAVY RAINS IN THE KABUL BASIN, THE SEASON HAS BEEN MARKED BY LOWER THAN NORMAL PRECIPITATION. AN AMATEUR METEOROLOGIST OBSERVES THAT BETWEEN JANUARY 1 AND MARCH 31, 1986 THERE WERE 13.5 INCHES OF PRECIPITATION, WHILE THIS YEAR (AS OF MARCH 21) PRECIPITATION IN THE KABUL AREA TOTALED ONLY 5.4 INCHES.

21. KABUL MEDIA:

AS PART OF THE NEW YEARS CELEBRATIONS NAJIB APPEARED ON KABUL TELEVISION IN AN OUTDOOR SCENE PLANTING TREES. CLEARLY VISIBLE FLANKING THE GENERAL SECRETARY WERE TWO MACHINEGUN-TOTING SOVIET BODYGUARDS.

22. NOT TO BE BRIEFED TO PRESS: (EMERGING PROPAGANDA THEMES):

(A) REGIME MEDIA ATTACK U.S. OVER STINGERS: THROUGH ITS MEDIA THE REGIME IS RATCHETING UP THE LEVEL OF ANTI-U.S. PROPAGANDA, FOCUSING IN PARTICULAR ON REPORTS OF U.S. PROVISION OF 300 ADDITIONAL STINGERS TO THE MUJAHIDIN.



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AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE  
SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6233  
INFO AFGHAN WAR COLLECTIVE  
USIA WASHDC 1627  
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
OSCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE  
FT BRAGG NC AFVS//POE//SB  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI  
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GE  
HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE  
HQ USAF RAMSTEIN AB GE//INCO  
USNMR SHAPE BE//INTAFF//  
WSCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCJ2-IO/M//  
DEFENSE COMMUNICATION SUPPORT GROUP  
RUCLFNA/347 TFW MOODY AFB GA//IN//  
USOCCOSOUTH NAPLES IT  
FSTC INTEL OPS CHARLOTTESVILLE VA//AIAST-IO-CMI//

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(S) U.S. RESPONSIBILITY FOR FAILURE OF "NATIONAL RECONCILIATION":  
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THE REGIME MEDIA IS INCREASINGLY PORTRAYING THE U.S. AS THE  
OPONENT OF ITS NATIONAL RECONCILIATION POLICY. THE  
EMERGING THEME APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN FORESHADOWED IN RECENT  
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COMMENTS OF THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR TO A SENIOR UN OFFICER THAT  
"NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IS PROGRESSING WELL DESPITE THE EFFORTS  
OF SOME WESTERN DIPLOMATS IN KABUL." IF AND WHEN THE REGIME  
(AND THE SOVIETS) ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE NATIONAL RECONCILIATION  
STRATEGY HAS FAILED (INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION STAFFERS  
WORKING IN REFUGEE CAMPS IN PAKISTAN, ACCORDING TO AMEMBASSY  
ISLAMABAD, REPORT THAT REFUGEES ARE NOT RETURNING TO AFGHANISTAN,  
BEARING OUT OUR CONCLUSIONS FROM THIS SIDE OF THE BORDER) IT  
APPEARS LIKELY THE REGIME WILL ALLEGE U.S. RESPONSIBILITY.

TEXT OF TELEGRAM 87KABUL 000504

23. MOSCOW MINIMIZE CONSIDERED. MCWILLIAMS

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